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METRO/STATE

Inmate's ICU stay costly for Hinds Co.

By Kathleen Beyda

Clarion-Ledger Staff Writer

"The estimate so far is \$50,000 for the county's portion of his bill," Gibson said. "Right now, we are not totally alarmed, but we have taken an aggressive approach to reduce cost."

Gibson said he meets regularly with the Sheriff's Department to expedite cases through the courts before sick inmates need to be hospitalized. He also recommended reducing the hours of the jail psychiatrist from six to four hours a week and replacing the contracted psychologist with a part-time psychiatric nurse who bills the county at a lower hourly rate.

Sheriff Malcolm McMillin said his department tries to keep costs down and already has been trying to expedite cases through the district attorney's office.

"All you need is that one inmate to bust your budget," he said.

McMillin also balked at the idea of cutting the psychiatrist's hours.

"A psychologist cannot prescribe medicine," McMillin said. "When we have to put a (guard) on a single inmate 24/7, we can't afford that kind of expense."

"That's why we need a psychiatrist to be able to give him medication necessary to control him and his actions."

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To comment on this story, call Kathleen Beyda at (601) 961-7262.

MISSISSIPPI BRIEFS

SCOTT COUNTY

NWS confirms F1 tornadoes

By Kathleen Beyda

Clarion-Ledger Staff Writer

The National Weather Service confirmed that two F1 tornadoes touched down in Scott County around 3 a.m. Thursday as strong storms moved through central Mississippi.

Damage reports include fences, large trees and a carport in the Hillsboro community, about six miles northeast of Morton.

In addition to the tornado damage, straight-line winds also blew trees in the same area.

An F1 tornado has winds that range from 73-112 mph.

GULFPORT

Firefighting job to be part time

The city of Gulfport is advertising a part-time firefighter position on its Web site to compensate for cutting out overtime for full-time firefighters.

The Fire Department also has fewer full-time firefighters because of a hiring freeze.

The city is seeking a part-time firefighter with at least two years' experience to be on call.

According to the posting, the position pays \$10.80 an hour.

Full-time firefighters have objected to removing overtime that was built into their regular pay.

The city, which has an operating deficit, expects to save money with part-time firefighters, but full-time firefighters note any part-timers hired will have to be equipped with gear.

UTICA

Boll-water notice lifted

State health officials Thursday lifted a preliminary "boll-water alert" for the 472 customers who get drinking water from the town of Utica.

The alert was instituted earlier this week after the system lost pressure.

Tests performed by the state Department of Health Laboratory show the water is safe to drink.

HERNANDO

Congressional bid announced

DeSoto County math teacher Les Green officially announced his independent candidacy Thursday for the 1st Congressional District.

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Election 2010

Mississippi native made his announcement at the Gale Community Center in Hernando.

Green said partisan leaders in Washington are focused more on politics than on job creation and debt reduction.

First-term incumbent Travis Childers, a Democrat, is seeking re-election. He has to primary opposition but could face as many as eight challengers in November.

Running for the Republican nomination are Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Alan Nunnelee of Tapelo, former Eupora Mayor Henry Ross and former Fox News Channel analyst Angela McGowan of Oxford.

Other third-party candidates in the race are A.G. Badley and Harold M. Taylor, both of Hernando; Rick Hoskins and Wally Pang, both of Balesville; Gail Giamante of Lake Cormorant; and Barbara Dale Washer of Hattiesburg.

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To share tips and ideas, contact Metro Editor Grace Siemens Fisher at (601) 961-7250, fax to 961-7211 or e-mail gsimmons@clarionledger.com.

Outdoor living show begins today



Sidney Oress (foreground) guides a guest while Dick Pross CEO President Benjamin White (left) and Dennis Trimble introduce it from a trailer Wednesday for the Mississippi Home Builders Association of Mississippi's 35th Annual Home & Outdoor Living Extravaganza at the Mississippi Trade Mart in Jackson. The event features seminars and yard and garden products. The show opens at 9 a.m. today and closes at 5 p.m. Sunday.

Greg Jensen/The Clarion-Ledger

Mental health lawsuit fought

■ State denies claims of discrimination against ill children

By Heather Civil

Clarion-Ledger Staff Writer

The Department of Mental Health denies allegations made in a federal lawsuit that the state unnecessarily institutionalizes its mentally ill children.

In a statement issued Thursday in response to the lawsuit, the Department of Mental Health said it provides services based on need.

"We believe home and community-based services are a vital part of the public mental health system," the statement reads. "DMH and community mental health providers provide home and community-based services to tens of thousands of children in Mississippi in 2009. DMH and community mental health providers offer a myriad of programs and services available in the home and community for children with serious emotional disturbances."

The lawsuit was filed by the Southern Poverty Law Center Mississippi Youth Justice Project, the Shastan Center for Mental Health Law and local civil rights attorney Rob McCall.

The lawsuit, filed Wednesday in Jackson, alleges the state discriminates against mentally ill children by not providing adequate care outside of hospitals and other institutions.

Residential centers and hospitals are only short-term fixes," said Vanessa Carroll with the Youth Justice Project and lead attorney on the case. "So it does not make sense to invest so much in the care when there are no resources in the community."

The Department of Mental Health has 110 acute psychiatric beds and 48 psychiatric residential treatment beds for children and adolescents.

"While in our care, many receive job training, college prep classes and opportunities to pursue their GED and all DMH facilities operate an accredited school," the statement reads.

DMH conducts reviews upon admission and continuous reviews to determine the need for inpatient care in order to ensure the individual is receiving care in the most appropriate setting."

The statement also says the Mental Health Department has reached out to Youth Justice to "inform and educate the organization which filed the lawsuit as to the numerous services provided in the community."

Carroll said Youth Justice has had several discussions with the state on this matter, but no agreement was reached. "We hope to work quickly to resolve this," Carroll said.

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To comment on this story, call Heather Civil at (601) 961-7067.

High court upholds attorney's disbarment

From staff and wire reports

manlaughter in the deaths of Michael Schreiner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman.

The tribunal that disbarred McIntyre noted he admitted during a bar association investigation he committed "falsified" funds, wrote checks from his lawyer trust account for personal expenses and used his trust account to cover personal debts.

The bar association alleged McIntyre took funds from seven clients over the course of four years. And it said his lawyer trust account on several occasions was overdrawn and subject to bank late fees.

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In his challenge to the recommendation, McIntyre argued disbarment was too harsh for his offense.

The Supreme Court, in rejecting that argument, said in a unanimous decision that McIntyre admitted to committing the "cardinal sin" of law practice by committing his clients' funds.

"Our precedent clearly supports McIntyre being disbarred, particularly in light of the fact that the complaint at issue included multiple instances of commingling over a prolonged period of time," Justice Randy Pierce wrote for the court. "The sale appropriation and commingling of client funds and the dishonesty involved themselves to the very heart of McIntyre's ability to practice law and to be put in a position of trust."

Reached Thursday afternoon, McIntyre told The Clarion-Ledger he was very disappointed.

The bank holding the trust fund wrongly took money from that account, he said. He had to put money back in to make up for the shortfall, he said. Eventually the bank put him back.

"Nobody was hurt, and I'm sorry it happened," McIntyre said. "I didn't try to cheat anybody."

He said he's going to apply next year to get his law license back.

"I'd like to be reinstated before I depart this planet," McIntyre said.

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Clarion-Ledger staff writer Jerry Mitchell's blog contributed to this report.

LAKE CHARLES

City IT director fired after arrest

re-designed and updated the city's Web site.

Authorities say Ashley Ottis and Jason Joyner also were arrested in the case, and each was charged with possession of a controlled substance. They also are free on bond.

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PASCAGOULA

Wife's killing nets 20 years

A 68-year-old St. Martin man has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for killing his wife in 2006.

Thomas Carr was sentenced Wednesday in Jackson County Circuit Court.

Carr was convicted last month of manslaughter in the death of his wife, Margie Faye Carr, 66. Prosecutors say Carr stabbed her and his wife got into an argument, she took a knife from a kitchen drawer, and he took it from her and stabbed her. Testimony revealed she was stabbed 19 times.

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JACKSON

Man charged in shooting death

Jackson police have made an arrest in Monday's fatal shooting of a man in the parking lot of the apartment complex where he lived.

Bryon Ellis, 34, of Jackson is charged with murder in the death of Barry Odum, 36, who was shot near his home at the North Hill Square Apartments off Chestnut Drive.

Ellis also is charged with possession of a stolen firearm after police found a stolen gun in his apartment during a search.

Police are not releasing a motive for Odum's death and are not saying whether the gun found in Ellis' apartment was the gun used in the shooting.

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